

**Influence of Locus of Control and Peer Association on Students' Academic Self-Confidence  
in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District**

**Dr. Udo, Ekerete Mathias & Dr. Obot, EmemAbasi AniebietAbasi**

Department of Psychological Foundations of Education

University of Uyo, Uyo

**&**

**Dr. Igiri, Charles Egbonyi**

Department of Educational Foundations and Administration,

College of Education, Awi Akamkpa

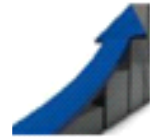
**Abstract**

*This study investigated the influence of locus of control and peer association on students' academic self-confidence in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District. In carrying out this study, two research questions and hypotheses were formulated. The study adopted the ex-post facto design. A total of 358 SS2 students were selected from a population of 17,886 Senior Secondary School (SS2) students in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District using multi stage sampling technique. The "Students' Peer Association, Locus of Control and Academic Self-Confidence Questionnaire" (SPALCASQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts. The instrument had a reliability index of .80 determined by using Cronbach Alpha reliability procedure. The Mean and Standard deviation were used in answering research questions, while the Independent t-test was used in testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that there is a significant influence of locus of control and peer association on students' academic self-confidence in secondary schools. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that teachers should be trained to incorporate strategies that encourage students to set specific, achievable academic goals, engage in self-reflection, and recognize the impact of their efforts on their success.*

**Keyword:** Association, Control, Locus, Peer, Students

**Introduction**

The academic performance and self-confidence of students in secondary schools are crucial determinants of their success in education. Academic self-confidence refers to a student's belief in their ability to perform well in academic tasks and to succeed in the educational environment. It is a crucial aspect of students' psychological makeup, influencing how they approach learning, handle academic challenges, and persist in the face of difficulties. Academic self-confidence is often linked to self-efficacy, a concept introduced by Bandura which refers to individuals' beliefs in their capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to achieve specific goals. Self-confidence in an academic context enables students to take on challenging tasks, engage actively in learning, and manage academic stress effectively.

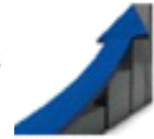


A growing body of research highlights the importance of academic self-confidence in enhancing students' motivation, academic achievement, and overall well-being (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Students with high academic self-confidence tend to adopt a proactive learning approach, are more likely to set challenging goals, and exhibit perseverance when facing obstacles. These students also report better academic performance, as they are more likely to engage in effective learning strategies and seek help when needed (Zimmerman, 2020). In contrast, students with low academic self-confidence often underestimate their abilities, which can lead to anxiety, procrastination, and avoidance behaviours (Pintrich, 2021). These students are less likely to take on academic challenges, may shy away from opportunities for academic growth, and may even disengage from the learning process altogether. Low self-confidence in academics is often linked to negative academic outcomes, such as lower grades, poor test performance, and a diminished sense of self-worth (Harris & Hasselbring, 2015). Among the factors influencing students' academic self-confidence, locus of control and peer association have been identified as pivotal elements in shaping students' perceptions of their ability to succeed in academic tasks.

Locus of Control refers to an individual's belief in the extent to which they have control over the events that affect their lives. It is a concept introduced by Rotter in 1966, categorizing people as having either an internal or external locus of control. Individuals with an internal locus of control believe that their own actions and efforts directly influence their success or failure. Conversely, those with an external locus of control attribute outcomes to external forces, such as luck, fate, or the influence of others. Research has shown that students with an internal locus of control tend to have higher academic self-confidence and performance as they believe their efforts can lead to success (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2021). Conversely, students with an external locus of control may experience lower self-esteem and lack the motivation necessary to succeed academically (Robinson & Judge, 2017). Therefore, locus of control is a key psychological factor in shaping students' academic self-perception and their approach to learning.

According to Rotter (1966), the construct is a generalized belief in internal versus external control over reinforcements that result from an individual's expectations. The two extremes of the locus of control continuum are represented by internal and external loci of control. Students' sense of control over how well they do in school is known as their locus of control in a learning environment. Those who have an internal locus of control credit their own hard work and dedication to their studies for their academic achievement. Students who have an external locus of control blame outside forces such as prejudice, biased educators, and environmental circumstances for their academic success or failure (Mahesh and Parashar, 2022).

One of the essential components of self-consciousness is control of locus, which links one's sense of identity, willingness to participate in activities, and sense of duty. Rotter contends that people vary from one another in how they interpret and interpret the events that are significant and important to them. Internal and external poles make up the two poles of control localization (Chomakhidze, as cited in Shanava and Gergauli, 2022). In the first scenario, an individual believes that everything that occurs in their life is a legitimate outcome of their own actions and is dependent upon their personal qualities, such as competence, purposefulness, and opportunities (inner control). In the second scenario, an individual has a strong belief that outside factors, like luck, chance, other individuals, and so forth (external control). Every individual occupies a unique place on the continuum of the locus of control formed by these two poles.



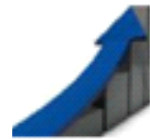
Locus of control is a distinct and essential type of generalised hopes, defined as the extent to which one understands the link that exists between one's behaviour and the achievement of the desired, according to Rotter. A person aspires to and attempts to accomplish goals and objectives because he or she generally believes that the endeavour will be fruitful. When someone has an external locus of control and feels that luck, chance, or other people determine their fate, they behave differently from someone who believes they have control over their own destiny (Shanava and Gergauli, 2022). Students' causal attributions shape their emotional responses and future expectations, of which eventually dictate the academic results they achieve today. One of the causative elements that have a major impact on students' succeeding in school is locus of control. Originating in Social Learning Theory—an attempt to integrate concepts from behavioural and cognitive schools with educational theory—is a psychological notion of locus of control. The locus of control, as defined by Atibuni, Ssenyonga, Olema, and Kemeza (2017), is the point at which a cause originates, i.e., whether an event's cause originates from within or outside the individual in question.

In recent years, studies have explored how the locus of control influences academic behaviours and self-confidence in various contexts, including secondary school settings. For instance, a study by Akpan and Eni (2022) found that secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, with a higher internal locus of control reported better academic achievements and stronger academic self-confidence. This supports the idea that students who believe they control their academic outcomes are more likely to be motivated, persistent, and confident in their abilities.

Peer Association also plays a significant role in the academic self-confidence of students. Peer association refers to the influence of classmates, friends, and other social groups on a student's attitudes, behaviours, and academic achievements. According to Wentzel (2018), peer relationships can either foster or hinder academic growth depending on the quality of the association. Positive peer associations, where students engage in academic discussions, share learning strategies, and support each other's educational goals, have been linked to higher levels of academic self-confidence (Wentzel, 2018). On the other hand, negative peer associations, such as involvement in anti-academic behaviours, can lower self-confidence and academic performance (Juvonen et al., 2016).

Peer association becomes important during this stage of adolescence and is crucial to the development of intimacy, interpersonal skills, and self-identity in teenagers. Adolescents' wardrobe choices are influenced by their peers, who also help each other develop communication and decision-making skills (Bankole and Ogunsakin, 2015). Many people can be persuaded by their peers to behave in ways they might not normally do, and young people are particularly impacted by this because this is the period when they are most likely to be experimenting with their identities and skills. One specific example of social impact is peer pressure, which typically results in consistency in behaviour or thought (Lashbrook, 2021). There are many different mechanisms of mutual influence processes in contemporary society, and one of Peer pressure from younger people is the mechanism that is most often mentioned.

Peer groups are essential for the development of personality. Effective peer engagement rises dramatically during adolescence, and the nature of peer relationships becomes more trustworthy and vulnerable. It has a greater impact on the teen's capacity for decision-making and the decisions they make (Santrok, 2018). Peer pressure is something that everyone encounters at a



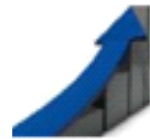
particular moment in their existence. peer influence is the term used to describe how a peer group influences a person's behaviour, standards, or habits. It is a major factor, particularly when there are emotional weak or inadequate family relationships. Students strive to please each other because they are so concerned about the love and respect of their peers (Korir and Kipkemboi, 2021). When someone makes choices or acts in a certain way because they are influenced by the characteristics or behaviours of their peers, that person is exhibiting peer influence. In Nigeria, peer group influence has been found to have a significant impact on students' academic motivation and self-efficacy. Asikpo et al. (2021) conducted a study in Akwa Ibom State and concluded that students who associated with peers who valued education and academic success reported higher academic self-confidence than those who associated with peers indifferent to academic achievement.

In the context of Nigerian education, academic self-confidence has been found to be a significant predictor of student performance and overall academic engagement. A study by Okeke (2021) highlighted those secondary school students in southern Nigeria who reported higher levels of academic self-confidence exhibited greater academic persistence and better outcomes. Similarly, Ogunyemi (2019) found that Nigerian students with stronger academic self-concepts were more likely to engage in active learning behaviours and seek out academic challenges. While previous studies have explored the individual impact of locus of control and peer association on academic performance, there is limited research examining their combined effect on students' academic self-confidence, especially in the context of Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating how these two psychological and social factors influence students' academic self-confidence in this region.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Academic self-confidence is a critical factor in determining students' success in school, influencing their motivation, engagement, and persistence in academic tasks. Students with high self-confidence are more likely to take on challenges, use effective learning strategies, and perform better academically. However, many students in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District experience low academic self-confidence, which negatively affects their academic performance and overall educational experience. Several factors contribute to the development of academic self-confidence, two of the most significant being locus of control and peer association. Locus of control refers to a student's belief in their ability to control their academic outcomes through their efforts. Students who believe that they can influence their success tend to have higher self-confidence and perform better academically. On the other hand, students who attribute their academic outcomes to external factors, such as luck or other people's influence, are more likely to experience lower self-confidence and lack the motivation needed to succeed.

Peer association also plays a significant role in shaping academic self-confidence. Positive interactions with peers who value education and academic success can boost a student's confidence, encourage productive academic behaviours, and provide emotional support. Conversely, negative peer influences, such as associating with students who engage in disruptive behaviours or devalue education, can undermine academic self-belief, leading to disengagement from schoolwork and lower performance. In Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District, the educational environment, social dynamics, and peer group influences are unique. Despite the importance of both locus of control and peer association in shaping academic self-confidence,



there is a lack of research examining how these factors interact and influence students in this specific context. Understanding how locus of control and peer association affect academic self-confidence in this region is essential for developing targeted strategies to improve students' confidence and academic outcomes. This study seeks to explore how locus of control and peer association influence the academic self-confidence of secondary school students in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District.

### **Objective of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to determine the influence of locus of control and peer association on students' academic self-confidence in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District. Specifically, this study is aimed to determine:

- i. The influence of locus of control on students' academic self-confidence in secondary schools.
- ii. How peer association influence students' academic self-confidence in secondary schools.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were set to guide the study;

- i. What is the influence of locus of control on students' academic self-confidence in secondary schools?
- ii. How does peer association influence students' academic self-confidence in secondary schools?

### **Research Hypotheses:**

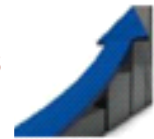
The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance.

- i. There is no significant influence of locus of control on students' academic self-confidence in secondary schools.
- ii. There is no significant influence of peer association on students' academic self-confidence in secondary schools.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted the ex-post facto design. The ex-post facto research design was considered suitable for this study because the researcher did not have direct control over independent variables since they had already occurred. The area of the study is Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District. The population of the study comprised 17,886 senior secondary school II (SS2) students from all the 86 public secondary schools in the nine Local Education Committees (LECs) in Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District. The multistage sampling technique was used in selecting the 358 students representing (2%) of the total population. The instrument titled: "Students' Peer Association, Locus of Control and Academic Self-Confidence Questionnaire" (SPALCASQ) was used to gather relevant information for this study. The instrument was divided into two sections. Section A contained information on peer association, locus of control while section B contained 20 items on students' academic self-confidence. A four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively was used. The instrument was face validated and appropriate corrections were made.





To establish the reliability of the instrument it was trial tested using 30 students sampled from the area of study that did not take part in the actual study and a reliability coefficient of 0.80 was obtained using Cronbach alpha procedure, which means the instrument was reliable enough for data collection. Data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using the Independent t-test.

## Results

**Research Question 1:** What is the influence of locus of control on students' academic self-confidence in secondary schools?

**Table 1: Summary of Mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and Standard Deviation (SD) Scores of Students' Responses on Influence of Locus of Control on Students' Academic Self-Confidence in Secondary Schools**

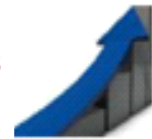
Variables	Locus of Control	N	( $\bar{x}$ )	SD
Self-Confidence	Internal	198	32.59	8.10
	External	160	29.51	8.29

The display of data in Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation scores of students' responses on locus of control and academic self-confidence. From the table, the 198 responses on internal locus of control produced a mean and standard deviation scores of ( $\bar{x} = 32.59$  and  $SD = 8.10$ ) as against 160 responses on external locus of control with a mean and standard deviation scores of ( $\bar{x} = 29.51$  and  $SD = 8.29$ ). The marked difference between the mean and standard deviation scores of students' responses on locus of control and academic self-confidence is an indication that internal locus of control have influence on students' academic self-confidence than internal locus of control.

**Research Question 2:** How does peer association influence students' academic self-confidence in secondary schools?

**Table 2: Summary of Mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and Standard Deviation (SD) Scores of Students' Responses on Influence of Peer Association on Students' Academic Self-Confidence in Secondary Schools**

Variables	Peer Association	N	( $\bar{x}$ )	SD
Self-Confidence	Positive	196	33.42	8.29
	Negative	162	28.54	7.55



The display of data in Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation scores of students' responses on peer association and academic self-confidence. From the table, the 196 responses on positive peer association produced a mean and standard deviation scores of ( $\bar{x} = 33.42$  and  $SD = 8.29$ ) as against responses on negative peer association with a mean and standard deviation scores of ( $\bar{x} = 28.54$  and  $SD = 7.55$ ). The marked difference between the mean and standard deviation scores of students' responses on peer association and academic self-confidence is an indication that positive peer association have influence on students' academic self-confidence than negative peer association.

**Null Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant influence of locus of control on students' academic self-confidence in secondary schools.

**Table 3: Independent t-test Statistics on Influence of Locus of Control on Students' Academic Self-Confidence in Secondary Schools (n= 358)**

Variable	Locus of Control	N	( $\bar{x}$ )	SD	t-cal	crit.	Decision
Self-Confidence	Internal	198	32.59	8.10	3.52	1.96	*Significant
	External	160	29.51	8.29			

*\*Significant at 0.05, t-cal = 9.13, t-crit = 1.962, n = 358*

The result of data analysis using the t-test statistics as shown in Table 3 shows that the calculated t-value is 3.52, while the critical t-value is 1.96. From the table analysis, the calculate t-value of 3.52 is found to be greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 when compared at 0.05 levels of significance. Based on this result, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence of locus of control on students' academic self-confidence in secondary schools is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis which stated that there is a significant influence of locus of control on students' academic self-confidence in secondary schools is retained.

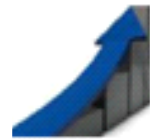
**Null Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant influence of peer association on students' academic self-confidence in secondary schools.

**Table 4: Independent t-test Statistics on Influence of Peer Association on Students' Academic Self-Confidence in Secondary Schools (n= 358)**

Variable	Peer Association	N	( $\bar{x}$ )	SD	t-cal	crit.	Decision
Self-Confidence	Positive	196	33.42	8.29	5.77	1.96	*Significant
	Negative	162	28.54	7.55			

*\*Significant at 0.05, t-cal = 5.77, t-crit = 1.962, n = 358*

The result of data analysis using the t-test statistics as shown in Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value is 5.77, while the critical t-value is 1.96. From the table analysis, the calculate t-value of 5.77 is found to be greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 when compared at 0.05 levels



of significance. Based on this result, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence of peer association on students' academic self-confidence in secondary schools is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis which stated that there is a significant influence of peer association on students' academic self-confidence in secondary schools is retained.

## **Discussion of Findings**

### **Locus of Control and Students' Academic Self-Confidence**

The results of this study indicate a significant influence of **locus of control** on students' academic self-confidence. Students who possess an internal locus of control, meaning they believe their academic success is determined by their own efforts and abilities, tend to exhibit higher levels of academic self-confidence. This finding aligns with existing research, which suggests that individuals with an internal locus of control are more likely to engage in proactive behaviours, take ownership of their learning, and maintain a sense of efficacy in academic settings (Zimmerman, 2020; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020).

When students perceive that their academic outcomes are within their control, they are more motivated to set and achieve academic goals, engage in self-regulation, and develop persistence when faced with academic challenges. Conversely, students with an external locus of control, who attribute their academic results to outside forces such as luck or fate, may lack the drive to put in sustained effort or take responsibility for their academic performance, leading to lower levels of self-confidence. This study's findings underscore the importance of fostering an internal locus of control among students, as it directly influences their academic self-concept and belief in their abilities.

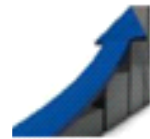
### **Peer Association and Students' Academic Self-Confidence**

Another significant finding from this study is the influence of **peer association** on students' academic self-confidence. Students who associate with academically motivated peers tend to demonstrate higher levels of academic self-confidence. Positive peer interactions provide not only emotional support but also validation of academic abilities, encouragement, and motivation (Wentzel, 2018). When students are surrounded by peers who value education and exhibit positive academic behaviours, they are more likely to internalize these behaviours, which enhances their self-confidence in their academic abilities.

This finding is consistent with research by Juvonen et al. (2016), which highlighted that students who associate with peers who prioritize academic success tend to develop more positive academic self-concepts. The role of peer association is particularly important during adolescence, a period when students are highly influenced by their social environment and peer group dynamics. Positive peer influence can contribute to higher academic expectations, greater motivation to engage in schoolwork, and an overall stronger sense of academic self-efficacy.

On the other hand, negative peer associations, such as peer groups that devalue education or engage in disruptive behaviours, can undermine students' academic self-confidence. This finding suggests that schools should encourage positive peer interactions and create environments where students can build supportive academic relationships. Promoting peer mentorship programs and cooperative learning opportunities can help foster positive peer influences, which, in turn, can boost students' academic self-confidence and performance.





## Conclusion

This study examined the influence of locus of control and peer association on students' academic self-confidence in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District. The findings indicate that both locus of control and peer association play significant roles in shaping students' academic self-confidence. Students with an internal locus of control, who perceive their academic success as a result of their own efforts, demonstrate higher levels of academic self-confidence. Similarly, students who associate with peers who value education and provide social and academic support also exhibit stronger academic self-confidence.

The results highlight the importance of fostering an internal locus of control among students, as it empowers them to take responsibility for their academic outcomes and boosts their confidence in their abilities. Additionally, promoting positive peer relationships within the school environment can significantly enhance students' academic self-belief. Peer support, encouragement, and academic collaboration create an environment conducive to building self-confidence, particularly among adolescents who are influenced by social interactions.

Given these findings, educational stakeholders—teachers, school administrators, and policymakers—should prioritize initiatives that cultivate internal motivation and encourage positive peer associations. Implementing strategies such as goal-setting programs, mentoring, and collaborative learning activities can contribute to the development of students' academic self-confidence. By addressing both locus of control and peer influence, schools can provide a more supportive and empowering environment that enhances students' academic performance and overall well-being.

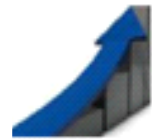
## Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made:

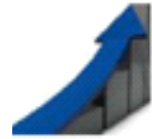
1. Teachers should be trained to incorporate strategies that encourage students to set specific, achievable academic goals, engage in self-reflection, and recognize the impact of their efforts on their success.
2. Schools can organize cooperative learning activities, study groups, and peer mentoring programs where students collaborate, share academic resources, and support each other's learning.

## References

- Akpan, E. O., & Eni, R. F. (2022). Locus of control and academic achievement of secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 25(1), 45-57.
- Asikpo, M. A., Ekwueme, M. J., & Essien, S. O. (2021). Peer influence and students' academic performance in Akwa Ibom State: Implications for academic self-confidence. *Journal of Educational Development*, 33(4), 78-92.



- Atibuni, D. Z., Ssenyonga, J. Olema, D. K. & Kemeza, I. (2017). Locus of control as a predictor of academic attitudes among university students. *International Journal of Educational Policy Research and Review*, 4(6): 125-137.
- Bankole, E. T. & Ogunsakin, F. C. (2015). Influence of peer group on academic performance of secondary school students in Ekiti State. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development*, 4(1): 322-331.
- Harris, K. R., & Hasselbring, T. S. (2015). The role of academic self-concept in educational achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 107(2), 341-355.
- Juvonen, J., Wang, Y., & Espinoza, G. (2016). Bullying experiences and peer associations: The influence on adolescents' academic motivation and achievement. *Educational Psychology*, 28(3), 303-313.
- Korir, D. K. & Kipkemboi, F. (2021). The Impact of school environment and peer influences on students' academic. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 5(1), 240-252.
- Lashbrook, J. T. (2021). Fitting in: Exploring the emotional dimension of adolescent pressure. *Adolescence*, 35(140): 747-757.
- Mahesh, A. & Parashar, N. (2022). The Association of Resilience, Psychological Well-being, Locus of Control and Academic Performance among Young Adults in Bangalore. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 10(3): 664-675.
- Ogunyemi, O. T. (2019). Academic self-concept and student academic performance in Nigeria. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 29(4), 58-67.
- Okeke, E. C. (2021). The role of academic self-confidence in secondary school students' academic persistence in southern Nigeria. *African Journal of Education and Development*, 11(3), 75-88.
- Pintrich, P. R. (2021). A conceptual framework for assessing motivation and self-regulated learning in college students. *Educational Psychology*, 39(2), 69-80.
- Robinson, S. P., & Judge, T. A. (2017). *Organizational behaviour (17th ed.)*. Pearson Education.
- Rotter, J. B. (1966). Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement. *Psychological Monographs*, 80, 1-28.
- Santrok, J. W. (2018). *Life-span: Development*. (4th Ed.). McGraw Hill, New York, 262p.
- Schunk, D. H., & DiBenedetto, M. K. (2020). Motivation and social cognitive theory. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 60, 101.



- Shanava, I. & Gergauli, G. (2022). A Study of Relationship between Locus of Control and Self-monitoring to Resilience in Students. *ESI Preprints*. 623p.
- Wentzel, K. R. (2018). Social relationships and motivation in middle school: The role of parents, teachers, and peers. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 90(2), 194-201.
- Zimmerman, B. J. (2020). *Attaining self-regulation: A social cognitive perspective*. In: M. Boekaerts, P. R. Pintrich, & M. Zeidner (Eds.), *Handbook of self-regulation* (pp. 13-39). Academic Press.
- Zimmerman, B. J., & Schunk, D. H. (2021). *Handbook of self-regulation of learning and performance*. Routledge.